

Canadian Churchman

Toronto, October 19th, 1916

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The Christian Year

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, Oct. 29.

Someone has said, "Man's great fault is, and remains, that he has so many small faults." There is at least a large element of truth in the remark. We are reminded of the words of One who possessed a far profounder insight than even John Paul Richter, and who said, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that St. Paul, in this great Epistle to the Ephesians, after his mountain-top vision of the age-long purpose of God for the Church, comes down to what would be considered by many the smaller details of conduct. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Bitterness, and evil-speaking, and malice—faults which we all recognize to be, perhaps, the besetting sins of "religious" people; faults which make much of the writing in the ecclesiastical press of the world to stink and be corrupt; faults which have made the grace of God an abomination to a rightly critical world.

"Man's great fault is, and remains, that he has so many small faults." Note the dangers of the small fault—the dangers that make the small fault really great.

The small fault is dangerous because it is so elusive. A man may be unaware of its presence in his character. Flagrant sins have been eschewed and put away. They would bring instant disgrace and reprobation. But the small fault is so subtle. It is ignored. It scarcely seems worth while taking trouble about. It is a secret disease. And for that very reason is all the more fatal.

For mark, next, the utterly destructive character of the small fault. At its best, it largely neutralizes the good that otherwise the life would achieve. It is a not uncommon spectacle to see a man endowed with many gifts of a high order, and yet to find him reckoned among his fellows as at least a comparative failure. And what is the cause? A small fault! He lacks, perhaps, a gracious sympathy with others; he retains some lurking jealousy which, from time to time, breaks out into an ill-concealed censoriousness; or he despises the day of small things, and only does his best when he knows that he is in the limelight; or he is afflicted with some strange instability of character, which makes him, like a rolling stone, ever pursue the new, because the old so quickly loses its charm for him; or he possesses some other of those innumerable blemishes which neutralize power—and so, where he might have moved the world for God, he moves little or nothing, and then he wonders the reason why!

So much for the small fault at its best. At its worst it eats like an unseen cancer; it becomes a dry-rot, which silently weakens character—until in a moment the catastrophe falls and the life goes down in ruin.

Small faults! After all, they are the real criterion of life. The man who is earnest enough to take care of the details, will make a success of life, as of everything else. If a character is to be securely built, as well as a Quebec Bridge, every casting must be

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Editorial Notes

The Red Cross.

Next to the men who are laying down their lives at the front rank the noble army of workers who minister to their bodies and souls. There never has been a war in which so much diversity was to be found in the implements of destruction, and there never was a war in which there was greater demand made upon the resources for alleviating pain and suffering. With its doctors and nurses, its hospitals, its motor ambulances, its hostels, its numerous ways of bringing relief for body and mind to the sick and the wounded, the Red Cross has become indispensable in times of war. And the length of recent casualty lists must be some indication of the demands made upon its resources. No effort should be spared to provide the sufferers with every possible source of relief, and there is no organization through which this can be done more effectively and efficiently than through the Red Cross. The appeal it makes is, however, naturally and deservedly a popular one, and will doubtless meet with a hearty response on the part of Canadians generally.

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Recruiting Officers.

The chief recruiting officer for Military District No. 2, himself a Methodist minister, stated recently at a gathering of that denomination in the city of Toronto that "out of the thirteen chief recruiting officers in Canada seven were Methodist ministers." We have the most profound regard for the noble sons of Methodist homes who have gone to the front, many of them having made the supreme sacrifice, and one must be careful not to generalize too freely. It will, however, take a great deal of explaining on the part of the Minister of Militia, a member of the same communion, to satisfy members of other communions that the above seven officers were all chosen on account of superior qualifications for this special work. One hesitates during the course of the war to say much on this subject, but our Bishops would do well to take note of these facts.

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Street Preaching.

If the National Mission in England did nothing more than emphasize the need and value of open-air work in the form of street preaching it would prove a blessing. There is, we know, a certain prejudice against it, an idea that it is *infra dig.*, but we have a strong suspicion that much of this prejudice is based on timidity. It is not always an easy thing to stand on a street corner, or a roadside, or other place where people gather, and address a motley assembly. There are almost certain to be awkward questions asked, when a ready wit and a clear mind are of inestimable value. Difficult and trying, though, as the work may be, it is bound to bring results, and is the only way of reaching a large percentage of the inhabitants of our cities. It is a work that requires plenty of good judgment, but when conducted properly commands attention and respect. Men realize the difficult character of such an undertaking, and this alone tends to command a sympathetic hearing. We are convinced that a

great deal more of it must be done in the future than in the past, and the Church must come to regard it more and more as a normal feature of its work.

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The Sons of Clergy and the War.

Recent casualty lists have reminded us of the heavy toll that is being levied by the war on the homes of our clergy. The old idea that the sons of clergy were among the worst in the average community has, like many another old idea, received a rude shock, and will, we hope, be heard little of in future. There is no class in Canada on whom the sorrows of war have fallen more heavily than on our clergy, and yet there is no class that is looked to as much as they to bring comfort to others. They have had to suffer many a privation and many an insult at the hands of those who are to-day willing to take shelter behind the courage and self-sacrifice of their noble sons. If the lessons they have endeavoured to teach, in season and out of season, had been taken to heart by others to the extent that they evidently have been by their own sons, there would be fewer slackers to-day. It must bring home very forcibly to every thinking man the value of the Christian ministry to the national life of a country. The lessons they teach are the fundamental principles of true success in commercial, political, social and educational life, and to eliminate their work would be to leave every other phase of human activity without adequate motive and objective. The lessons they have been teaching forced Britain into the present war, and they are bearing their share in it ungrudgingly. It is to be hoped that each of us will recognize and profit by these facts in future to a much greater extent than we have in the past.

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Soldiers and the Franchise.

The Rev. L. J. Donaldson, of Halifax, has offered a very sane suggestion. There are hundreds of people in Canada who are dissatisfied with the present situation in recruiting. Thousands of our men have enlisted for service and many have already laid down their lives. Among those who have enlisted have been large numbers of men, married men with families, men over the age limit, and men who are merely boys, who should not have gone. On the other hand, there are thousands of eligible young men who should have gone, who are profiting by the sacrifice made by others and who, unless something is done, will continue to reap material advantage from it. Compulsory service in this country under present conditions is not, we fear, feasible, but there is no reason in the wide world why every eligible man should not have his duty pointed out to him in the plainest possible terms and, unless he is able to give a satisfactory reason why he should not enlist, should, temporarily at least, be denied the privilege of sharing in the government of the country. Under present conditions the man who has a keen sense of duty and counts obedience to duty of more value than life itself will, if he is spared to return, have no more say in the government of the country than the most cowardly slacker who has the necessary property qualifications. The men who are willing to serve their country should be the men who are given the right to govern it.